

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 30297

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PCAT, PARM, NATO, FR
SUBJ: FRENCH POSITION ON NATO BRIEFING RE CAT

REF: 77 PARIS 14937

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: FRENCH APPEAR READY TO AGREE TO
A US BRIEFING AT NATO ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS
(CAT) TALKS WITH SOVIETS. HOWEVER, GOF WILL APPARENTLY
AGREE ONLY IF THIS IS DONE DISCREETLY IN PRIVATE MEET-
ING IN NATO SECRETARY GENERAL'S OFFICE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN SEPTEMBER 13 CONVERSATION WITH POLITICAL
COUNSELOR, BENOIT D'ABOVILLE (COUNSELOR TO THE FOREIGN
MINISTER) SAID THAT GOF HAS INSTRUCTED AMBASSADOR TINE
TO OPPOSE ANY FORMAL US BRIEFING OF THE NAC ON US-
SOVIET BILATERALS RE CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS (CAT).
D'ABOVILLE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT TINE WOULD BE ABLE TO
AGREE IF SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS HOSTS A PRIVATE MEETING
OF PERMREPS IN HIS OFFICE FOR THAT PURPOSE.

3. D'ABOVILLE SAID FRENCH RATIONALE FOR RESISTING A
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FORMAL BRIEFING OF THE NAC IS AS FOLLOWS:

(A) IF LEAKED, A FORMAL BRIEFING MIGHT IMPLY
THAT THE US IS NEGOTIATING ON BEHALF OF ITS NATO ALLIES
WITH THE SOVIETS;

(B) IF LEAKED, THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES COULD VIEW
SUCH A BRIEFING AS AN ATTEMPT BY THE NATO "IMPERIAL-
ISTS" TO DIVIDE UP THE WORLD'S ARMS MARKET.

4. COMMENT: WE ARE UNAWARE THAT THE US INTENDS TO PROPOSE SUCH A BRIEFING AND WOULD APPRECIATE COMMENT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OR US NATO. WITH REGARD TO THE FRENCH POSITION AGAINST SUCH A NAC BRIEFING, WE RECALL THAT LAST YEAR (SEE REFTTEL) DE LABOULAYE STATED THAT DISCUSSIONS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS RESTRAINTS ARE NOT WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF THE NAC.
GAMMON

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